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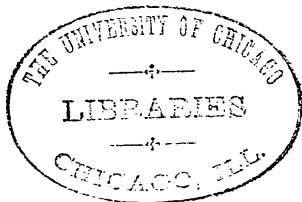
CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTIONS

CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTIONS

BY
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AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM

*Domine Deus, quaecunque dixi in hoc libro de
tuo Agnoscant et Tui si qua de meo et Tu ignosce et
Tui.*

O Lord God, whatever I have said in this book
of Thine may those who are Thine recognize it,
if anything of mine own do Thou and Thine
pardon.

PREFACE

THIS little book is in substance the Confirmation Instructions given in Christ Church, Windsor, for some years.

I hope it may be of service to the young student or newly ordained priest who has to take his first Confirmation Class. He can use the chapters as they stand, and later enlarge them for himself.

I have also used it myself to prepare scattered candidates who are unable to come in to a centre for instruction and whom the Rector cannot reach in order to instruct them. (This is quite a common state of affairs in Canada.)

Perhaps too it may make a suitable Confirmation gift for a boy or girl to remind them of one of the biggest days in their life.

I want to express my indebtedness to many, especially Archdeacon Paterson-Smyth, of Montreal, for his help in the preparation of this book.

And if the book is of use, may I ask those who use it to remember the very unworthy Author in their prayers.

CHARLES PATERSON SMYTH.

WINDSOR, NOVA SCOTIA,
Lent, 1926.

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I

THE SACRAMENTAL IDEA, THE HELP OF CONFIRMATION

I

LET me begin with some questions.

1. Is it easier to be good or to be bad?

Answer.—It is easier for us to be bad.

2. Do we know what we ought to do?

Answer.—Yes. Our conscience tells us what we ought to do.

3. Which does God want us to be—good or bad?

Answer.—God wants us to be good.

4. Is He willing to help us to be good?

Answer.—Yes. God is willing to help us to be good.

5. How does God help us ?

Answer.—God helps us by the Sacraments, especially Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion.

My father once told me the way he was taught to swim. A man took him on his back and swam out into deep water ; then he dived from under him and left him either to sink or to swim. My father decided to swim ! That is one way of teaching a person to swim, but it is a pretty hard and dangerous way. In my case, when I learned to swim, a man put a rope around me and helped and supported me until I could swim alone. That is another way of learning and it is kinder and easier than the first.

Now that is something like two different ideas about the Christian life. Some good earnest people—e.g. the Salvation Army—say to a man who has been converted and turned back to lead a good life :—“ Now you are converted, go out and lead a good life from now on.” That

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is good as far as it goes, but human nature is human nature and to some extent that means "Sink or swim." For many of us it is going to mean "Sink." That is something like the first method of teaching the boy to swim. The way of the Church is more like the second way. She demands conversion from all who have missed of God, and she says in the name of her Lord: "I know the battle is hard, and your strength is weak; I know that left to yourself you will probably sink; I will help you; I will support you by means of the Sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion." That is something like the second method of teaching the boy to swim.

That is the difference between the religion of the Church and the religion of the Salvation Army. We have Sacraments and they have not.

Some years ago I was suddenly called to see a dying Armenian. He was very ill. I knew no Armenian, he knew no English.

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I tried first to get the Armenian in the next bed to interpret for me, but it was no use. I could have read Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer to him until we were both black in the face. He would have been none the wiser. And so I simply began to celebrate the Holy Communion by his bedside. He didn't know one word of what I said, but he understood perfectly. He had often seen his Priest in far-off Armenia do the same, and he knew now; he could see "the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace." In such a position the Salvation Army Captain would have been practically helpless, but I, as a priest, could offer him the Sacraments of the Church of God, which are essentially the same all over the world. And the old man died, helped by the ministration of the Church through the "valley of the shadow of death."

We don't want to be scolded and told "You ought to do this," "You ought not

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to do that.” For the most part we know that. What we need to be told is that there is outside ourselves a power and strength that we can receive to help us be the men and women we would like to be. That power is given us in the Sacraments of the Church.

Now then, what is a Sacrament ?

II

You say in the words of the Catechism, “It is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” Quite right, but if you were to give that answer to your little brother or sister, if they asked you what a Sacrament was, he probably wouldn’t understand what you were talking about. And so let me give a little different explanation. “A Sacrament is a sign that I can see of something which I cannot see.” For example, some time ago my father and mother sent me a cheque for my birthday. As it lay before me on

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my desk, it was a sign that I could see of something which I could not see—the love of my father and mother; and, besides, it conveyed a blessing or benefit (for money is a benefit) from them to me. That is something like a Sacrament, which is a sign of God's love and also conveys a very real blessing from Him to me.

When Jesus Christ started His Church, He placed in it Sacraments—"signs we could see of that which we could not see." He might have said, "Every child that is born into the world will, after a few weeks, be 'born again' in a very real sense into My family, the Church, the new family that I have had to make within the old one of natural ties, because of sin,—there to be educated and brought up as befits a child of God, to receive the forgiveness of sin and the gift of God's Holy Spirit." And the world might have said, "Ah, yes, we'd like to believe it, but is it

true ? ” “ Yes,” said Jesus Christ, “ it is true,” when He instituted Holy Baptism in order that by a sign which we could see—water—in the name of the Blessed Trinity, we might be assured of the truth about the gifts of Baptism.

So with Holy Communion. The good Lord might have said, “ I will give every boy and girl, man and woman, My Divine strength, help from on high, to be the men and women they, in their better moments, know they ought to be.” That “ would be too good to be true,” we might have said, and so Jesus Christ, in His condescension to human weakness, gave us a sign that we could see—Bread and Wine—by which we might understand that, in a way beyond our mortal understanding, Jesus Christ was passing His Divine life into us to give us power and strength to live the life that we, or most of us anyway, are trying to live.

So with Confirmation. God might have

said, "I will give to everyone at a certain age my Holy Spirit." But, in order that we might believe, He gave us a sign and that sign was the laying on of hands.

So, when I say to you, "Be confirmed. Be helped by the gift of the Holy Spirit of God," and you say, "I'd like to believe what you say, but is it true?" Come and try. Come and kneel at the Bishop's feet and by the sign that you can see and feel—the laying on of hands—be assured of the truth of the thing which you cannot see—the strengthening of the Confirmation candidate by the Holy Spirit of God Himself.

This is your first great lesson, the help the Sacraments can be to your life. Surely you would be very foolish if you did not use them. If you were starving and I put before you the most wonderful meal imaginable and you refused to eat and died of starvation, you would only have yourself to blame. And so if you reject

and turn away from the Sacraments and your miserable little soul shrivels up and dies for want of Spiritual food and you fall before the first temptation that attacks you, you have absolutely nobody but yourself to blame.

II

REASONS FOR BEING CONFIRMED

NOW, then, we are ready to answer the question, "Why should I be confirmed at all?"

I will give you five reasons which you can count up on the fingers of your hand.

1. I am going to be confirmed *because the Church orders it.*

Where? At the end of the Baptismal office, in the rubric at the end of the Catechism, in the rubric after the Confirmation office, and it has been the rule and order of the Church for 1,900 years.

Every time I or any other priest baptize a baby we say to the parents and the Godfathers and Godmothers, "Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon

The Reasons for Confirmation

as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments and be further instructed in the Church Catechism, as set forth for that purpose."

That is the order of the Church. You and I are very poor and worthless members of any Society if we do not obey its rules.

2. I am going to be confirmed *because the Bible orders it.*

Where? In the following passages: Acts viii. 5, 6, 12, 14-17.

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

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Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John :

Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost :

(For as yet He was fallen upon none of them : only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

You see what happened. Philip went down into this heathen city and preached to them and converted many, and then he baptized them. So far I could have gone myself. But then see what he did. He sent up a message to the Apostles (the Bishops of that day) to say in the language of to-day, "I have some candidates for Confirmation ; come down and lay your hands on them and confirm them." The Apostles thought it worth while to

listen to Philip's request and come down, just as our own Bishops do at the present day.

You get another example in Acts xix. 1-6.

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

The Reasons for Confirmation

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them ; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

Paul came to Ephesus and when he met these disciples he said to them, " Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? " Your Bishop would not have said that. He would have said, " Have you been confirmed ? "

St. Paul then explained the difference between John's baptism and Christian baptism, then he baptized them. After that he laid his hands upon them, " confirmed " them, we should say, and the Holy Ghost came upon them as He does upon the young Confirmation candidate to-day.

These two examples are probably only given by St. Luke as samples of the normal practice everywhere of the early Church.

The Reasons for Confirmation

One more example. Read Hebrews vi. 1 and 2.

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection ; not again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of *laying on of hands*, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

Here “laying on of hands,” Confirmation, is included in the foundation truths of the Christian faith.

3. I am going to be confirmed *because I am weak and I need strength*.

I have spoken of this before. You and I know how weak we are. We are failing every day, in spite of our good intentions. We need some power from outside ourselves to give us the strength that we so sadly need. Confirmation means a “making strong,” a “strengthen-

The Reasons for Confirmation

ing.” And we who have been confirmed, we can tell you as we look back on our experience that at Confirmation the gift of the Holy Ghost did come to us to help us ever afterwards to be the men and women that we in our better moments know we ought to be.

4. I am going to be confirmed *because I want to publicly recognize my responsibilities as a member of the Church of God.*

When you were a little baby, certain promises were made in your name; they were part of the covenant of Baptism. Now at your Confirmation you are in the eyes of the Church “coming of age” spiritually. It is your privilege now to recognize (not “assume”) your responsibilities and proudly before the congregation declare your intention to be Christ’s faithful soldier and servant unto your life’s end.

5. I am going to be confirmed *because Confirmation is the gateway to Holy Communion.*

The Reasons for Confirmation

The law of the Church is quite clear.

“And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion until such time as he be confirmed or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.”

III

THE OBLIGATIONS OF BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

(A) RENOUNCE

WE come next to the first vow of your baptism—the vow of Renunciation.

You promised, or your Godfathers and Godmothers promised for you, at your baptism that you should “renounce,” that is, “give up” certain things.

God wants above all things that you should be good, and He wants you to “give up,” to “fight against” all that is wrong and evil and impure, whether in your own life or in the world in which you live. It doesn’t mean that you must wait to be confirmed until you are victorious. If so, we should never have any Confirmation candidates. It means that

The Obligations of Baptism

you and I are engaged in a fight which never ceases this side of death.

I

The Church Catechism tells you that you are to renounce three things :

1. The Devil and all his works.
2. The pomps and vanities of this wicked world.
3. All the sinful lusts of the flesh.

Were we writing the Catechism to-day, we should probably word these somewhat differently ; and yet, rightly understood, the Catechism has included all the sins and dangers that haunt man's life from the cradle to the grave.

Let us take them one by one.

A

“ The Devil and all his works.”

What kind of works does the Devil do ? Clearly bad works. His works include tempting you to :

The Obligations of Baptism and

1. *Pride* — that is, thinking yourself better than other people.

2. *Envy and Hatred*.

3. *Lying*. The Devil is called the father of lies (St. John viii. 44).

4. *Tempt other people to sin*. The worst sin of all, for however black a sin is when you do it yourself, it is far worse to tempt other people to do it.

To sum up—the first part of the vow means to fight always and everywhere against all sin.

B

“The pomps and vanities of this wicked world.”

We would probably write this to-day more simply, “to renounce all worldliness.”

A boy's world is made up of many things: hockey, baseball, football, and at least a certain amount of work.

A girl's is made up of pleasure parties, school life, and other things.

A man's or woman's world is made up of their work, their pleasure, their home, and all the interests of their life.

These things are for the most part harmless in themselves, but they become quite definitely harmful when we, as so many people do, let them come between us and God.

To sum up—the second part of this vow means to fight against worldliness : living for self and not for God, avarice (that is greed for money and position), ambition and vain glory, and against letting things in our life which may be quite innocent come between us and God.

C

“ The sinful lusts of the flesh.”

(Lust = a desire ; flesh = the body.)

There are some desires of my body that are perfectly natural and harmless until they are overindulged, e.g.

Sleep overindulged becomes *sloth*.

Eating overindulged becomes *greediness*.

The Obligations of Baptism and

Drinking overindulged becomes *drunkenness*.

Various impulses and desires over-indulged become *impurity*.

We need to learn very badly nowadays the lesson of temperance—self-control in everything.

II

I shall have more to say to you later about how to examine your life and find out about your sins and weaknesses, but I want you just now chiefly to realize the fierce contest which is going on between the forces of sin led by the Devil and the forces of God and His Church, whose captain is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

You are enlisting for a lifelong battle against sin, and therefore I want you to think hard to-day about sin and its results in the world and in your life and mine.

Sin is disobedience to the will of God, and God does not force us to obey. Sin is a matter of choice. We can obey God

or disobey Him, as we choose. He has given us the terrible but glorious gift of free will.

Now think of the results of sin :

1. *Sin separates me from God.*

“Those who do such things cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.” “If thy foot offend thee, cut it off,” etc.

It seems that it was the awful sense of desolation, of separation from God that made the Saviour cry out on Calvary, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ”

Perhaps I can best illustrate with this story.

When I was a little boy I told my mother a lie about something. Immediately that lie raised a barrier between my mother and me. I didn't want to be in her presence ; I could not look her straight in the face as I always had. The lie had separated me from her.

And just in the same way our many sins raise barriers between us and God.

2. *Sin hurts other people*, nearly always the innocent ones. The selfish man by his selfishness makes his home a little colony of hell here on earth. The drunkard by his sin hurts his wife and family. The brute beast who has given way to his evil passions has taken away a young girl's honour and ruined her life.

And what about the gentle Christ whom men and women are continually crucifying day by day by the very sins for which He died so many years ago? Our sins affect far more people than ourselves.

3. *Sin spoils us for God's purpose in the world.*

In the case of the gross sinner—the drunkard, the vile, immoral man—we can easily enough see that the purpose for which Almighty God designed the man is spoiled. But we do not see it so easily in our own case.

All sins, be they little or great, render us by that much less fit for the great purpose which God has for us and the world.

III

And lastly.—“ When I have committed sin, what am I to do ? How can I get rid of it ? ”

For answer go back to that little story of my boyhood that I told you—of how I told my mother a lie. Here were the steps : (a) A lie told, a sin committed. (b) The result was at once a barrier raised between me and my mother. (c) That barrier remained until I went to my mother and confessed my sin and was forgiven.

It is just the same between you and God. When you have committed a sin you have thereby raised a barrier between you and God, and that barrier will remain until you confess your sin to God and thereby receive His forgiveness.

You ought not to come forward for Confirmation with sins unconfessed and unrepented of. You should come to the great event *white*. The Bishop's prayer assumes that you have received forgiveness for

your sins. (“And hast granted unto them forgiveness of their sins.”)

Examine your life carefully and find out your sins and weaknesses and failures. Tell them to God; confess your sins to Him, either alone or in the presence of your clergyman in the Church, for “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

IV

THE OBLIGATIONS OF BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

(B) BELIEVE

WE come next to the second Baptismal vow—that you by your Baptism are required to believe certain things. “Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and do as they have promised for thee?” That is the question of the Catechism, and your answer is, “Yes, verily, and by God’s help so I will.”

People tell us sometimes that “belief does not matter,” that as long as a man leads a pretty decent life his belief is a matter of very secondary importance. But that statement is absurd! The derivation of the word believe is “By-live”—“that by which I live.”

The Obligations of Baptism and

Belief influences action. As I believe, so am I going to act. If I believe that fire will not burn or water drown, in all probability I shall end up by being burnt or drowned. If I believe that the ice of a certain pond in winter is not strong enough to bear me, my belief will keep me from going on the pond at all. And if belief matters so much in the ordinary affairs of life, it matters enormously what I believe about God and Jesus Christ and His Holy Angels and the great unseen world that lies around and beyond this one. If I believe that God is true and pure and holy, I will try and be so too, and if I believe, as some savage tribes do, that God is hard and cruel and even immoral, then almost certainly I will be hard and unkind and immoral too.

The Church then insists that there is a very real obligation on you to believe; that belief is not a matter of little importance—something that a man can do or

not do as he wills. And then she puts before you her creed, her belief, which she gathered together long ago and which she expects every child of hers to believe.

In its simplest form we know it as the Apostles' Creed. I have only time to tell you now of its three great divisions.

“What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?” So runs the Catechism and you reply, “I learn to believe

1. In God the Father, Who hath made me and all the world.

2. In God the Son, Who hath redeemed me and all mankind.

3. In God the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God.”

Let us take these three divisions of the Creed.

1. *I learn to believe in God the Father.*

Why?

(a) Because mankind generally has always felt that he must believe in a God. All over the world, in the frozen wastes in

the Arctic, in darkest Africa, you will find belief in a God of some kind. There are in India according to a recent census over 300,000,000 people. Only 15 of these put themselves down as Atheists, as not believing in any God at all. That fact alone makes us think. The fact that mankind has at all times and in all places been able to say, "I believe in God," even though their ideas of God may have been very different to ours.

(b) Because of what I see of God's revelation of Himself in the world. I judge you by what you say and what you do, by the "manifestations of your character"; and I judge God in the same way. I watch the glories of the sunset, the beauties of the starlit sky; they all speak to me of God. Look for example at this watch of mine. Before I think of its existence I have to think of the man who designed it and the men who made its every part. Behind this watch there must have been someone to make it. I cannot

believe that a play of Shakespeare is the result of the accidental upsetting of a box of printer's type. A wonderful oratorio demands behind it some great musician to compose it. Even so, this wonderful world in which we live demands back of it an all-wise intelligence to bring it into being.

(c) Think again of this body of yours in which you live. Put your hand on your heart and feel it opening and shutting. If it stopped for a moment you would be dead. Put your hand upon your lungs and feel them rising and falling. Realize that it is God's hand on your heart, opening and shutting, causing your lungs to rise and fall even when you are asleep, and then I defy you to say, "I do not believe in God."

(d) Think next of the mystery of the human conscience.

"There are two things," said Immanuel Kant, the great German philosopher, "that fill me with wonder and awe: the starry

world above and the moral law within." And as he marvelled over it, have you never marvelled over it? Where did it come from—this strange judge within you that says, "You ought to do this," "You ought not to do that"? If you obey it, well and good. If not, it drags you up for judgment for the sins you have committed. It sets up standards of right which you didn't set up. Did they come by chance, or did they come direct from God who made us?

You can meet men who disbelieve in the Bible, in the Church, even in Jesus Christ Himself, but you will never get a man who disbelieves in conscience. He daren't. We all know its terrors! The murderer wakes up at night and feels the cold sweat running down his face as he thinks of what he has done, as he feels conscience walking up and down behind the veil of the Here-after pointing him out to a judgment day in the future for him to be very much afraid of indeed.

Conscience is you yourself in your consciousness of the Divine will. When conscience wakes and speaks, it is God Almighty in actual spiritual contact with man. God is making known His will to you.

2. I learn to believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Why ?

(a) Because I find in the Old Testament a very wonderful story of how all the prophets of the Old Testament, men who lived often thousands of miles apart, and who preached hundreds of years apart, all looked forward to and pointed men on to some great one—the suffering Servant of Jehovah—the Messiah who should come to save His people. Years afterwards their prophecy was fulfilled and fulfilled only once in History, in the person of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

(b) Because of what He said about Himself. He claimed to be the Son of God. He claimed to be absolutely sin-

less. He taught others to pray for forgiveness, but He never did so Himself. By His life story He was not a fraud or a liar or a lunatic (in all reverence be it said). I can therefore only understand His claims in the light of His character and confess that when He said He was the Son of God, He did but speak the truth.

(c) The proof of anyone's existence does not consist in a legal certificate of birth, but rather in his influence, the result of his life upon the world. The proof of Shakespeare's life and existence lies in the influence that he has left behind him. The proof of the existence of Jesus Christ lies in the fact that all history centres round the birth of the Son of God. That which went before led up to it, and all history that came after is dated from the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. If He were nothing but a poor deluded Jewish carpenter who died and was buried in Joseph of Arimathæa's tomb, then how do you account

for the great Church of to-day founded simply and solely on His life and resurrection, and for the fact that thousands of men and women are willing to live and die for Him to-day ?

(d) And the last and most striking proof of all is experience. We know Him in whom we have believed. We have talked with Him in prayer. We have met Him in the Sacrament. We know in a way that we couldn't altogether explain to others that He is what He said He was—Jesus Christ the Son of God.

3. I learn to believe in God the Holy Spirit.

Why ?

Because I see the effects of His power. Here are two wires by the roadside : one is on the telegraph posts, one in the fence that runs round a vacant lot. One is dead, lifeless ; the other is alive with a strange, mysterious power that can flash messages from here to Vancouver, that can kill a man, that can light the streets

of the town. No one can explain electricity ; no one can see it ; but I know it is there by the effects it produces, by the work it can do.

So, though I never saw the Holy Spirit, yet I know of His existence by the effects of His power. When I see men and women, boys and girls, acting from the highest motives in a way for which they possibly could not account ; when I see men and boys good and true and pure, and the girls gentle and loving and Christ-like,—I say here is the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Therefore I believe in Him. I believe in the Holy Ghost.

Does it matter what you believe ? Yes, it matters enormously. If I believe that honesty is the best policy, I will be honest. If I believe that God is holy and pure and that holiness and purity are His will for me, then I will strive to be holy and pure.

This creed or faith of the Church has

made the saints of history, and if you and I believe it and let it mould our lives we too can become like them, more like the perfect man—"the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

V

THE OBLIGATIONS OF BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

(C) OBEY

(THE TEN COMMANDMENTS)

THE third obligation of Baptism is “that I should keep God’s Holy Will and Commandments and walk in the same all the days of my life.”

I ask you therefore to think to-day of the third of these—the Ten Commandments and their importance.

There is a tendency nowadays to discredit the Ten Commandments ; to think them out of date, behind the times, belonging to the far-off days of the Old

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Testament, with little or no bearing on our life at the present day.

Against any such ideas the Church resolutely protests. She places them at the beginning of her most sacred service—the Holy Communion. She demands that every child for whose religious instruction she is responsible shall know them, and she demands as the third obligation of baptism to which the child is pledged “that he should keep God’s holy will and Commandments and walk in the same all the days of his life.” And Rudyard Kipling, in one of his poems, bears unconscious testimony to the influence these Ten Commandments have had on the whole life and morality of humanity when he describes a place, where liberty and licence reigned supreme and a man could do just what he liked, in these words :

“Where there ain’t no ten Commandments,
And a man can slake a thirst.”

I

Think first of how the Ten Commandments are to be understood.

Education must be a very gradual thing, built up by slow degrees, "Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little." You do not teach a little boy just entering the first grade of a public school here Latin, Greek, Higher Mathematics, etc. It would be perfectly useless, far too difficult for the child's mind to grasp without long previous preparation. Instead you teach him reading, writing and arithmetic—the lower elementary lessons of school—lessons which need never be unlearned and which will be the foundations on which all his future education will have to be built. Education in religion is exactly the same.

If I sent you out as a missionary to a savage African tribe with all their evil habits upon them—drunkenness, impurity,

immorality—very much as the Israelites were to whom Moses gave the Ten Commandments—what would you teach them as the first and most important thing in religion? To read their Bible? But they don't know how to read. The Lord's Prayer? They do not know God as a Father. To love their enemies? That self-sacrifice is glorious? They would probably laugh at you and turn away from the faith that you were trying to preach. They have been used to waiting for their enemy with a club some dark night and dashing his brains out. To tell them suddenly, "You must love your enemy," is teaching far beyond anything that they can understand.

Where are you to start, then? How better than with the ten laws or Commandments of God? The old savage can understand the lesson, "Thou shalt not kill." It is a lesson quite within his reach. It was given to people in much the same stage as himself. If you can keep him

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from actually killing his man, that is the first step. And some day you would hope that, after you had him baptized, confirmed and a Communicant, and a member of the Church for many years, that he would be able to understand the full greatness and wonder of the command, "Love your enemies and do good to them that despitefully use you."

So with the other Commandments. They are the foundations of religion, the alphabet of Christianity itself.

I can imagine some old Israelite lying on his death-bed and Moses, the old leader, comes to see him. "Moses," the old man says, "I have kept the Ten Commandments absolutely literally, according to the strict letter of the law. I have not stolen, I have not killed, I have not committed adultery, and so on." And Moses says, "My son, you haven't done so badly with your life. Jehovah has not much fault to find with your life. You have lived up to the law of

God as we the Children of Israel have received it. You can die in peace." And I think, if Moses said that he would be right.

But with us things are very different. To keep the Ten Commandments according to the strict letter of the law is not enough for us. Were I dying and were I to say to the Priest who came to minister to me in my last moments, "I have kept the Ten Commandments absolutely literally; I have not stolen, killed, committed adultery"—that is not enough for me, ~~for there is this very big difference between~~ me and the old Israelite of whom I told you: Christ has come since his day and ~~has told us that He expects a great deal~~ more from us than verbal obedience to the Ten Commandments of Sinai. Listen to His teaching about it:

"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of

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the judgment; *but I say unto you*, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery; *but I say unto you*, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: *but I say unto you*, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

Ye have heard it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;

but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil : but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Ye have heard it said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy : *but I say unto you*, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you ; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven."

You see what that means. Jesus tells us that He expects us to keep these Commandments much more fully than the old Israelite of Moses' day. We must keep them "in spirit, as well as in letter" ; e.g. what Commandment forbids men to kill ? Sixth, isn't it ? Well, how many people have you killed ? You ? You ? You don't look as if you had killed anybody, but could you say "not guilty," if examined under the heading of this sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" ? Our Lord tells you that it is not enough

for you not to kill. He says, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill, but I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the Judgment." Were you ever angry with someone? Have you never heard someone say, "My, how I'd like to kill so and so!" I confess to you that I have sometimes at least felt like that. And in so far as we do that our Lord says we have broken this Commandment.

Take another Commandment. The first Commandment. Taken absolutely literally I have no temptation to break that and have a private God of my own in the Rectory. I have no wish to be like the Chinaman with his little kitchen god, which he keeps on a shelf in the kitchen, and over whose head he throws a blanket when he doesn't want the god to see some wicked act of his.

My temptation and yours is far worse.

That Commandment tells me that among all the many things that claim at least their share of my life, one thing and one only must come first in my life and that something is God Himself and His blessed purposes for the world. But which of us hasn't sometimes at least let the fear of public opinion, desire for money, pleasure, popularity, occupy the first place in our lives, which belongs only to God, and decide our course of action and hurry us on to do things which we in our better moments would never approve? And when we do that we break that first Commandment, understood as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to do.

And so with all the other Commandments. We are to keep them not only in letter, but in the spirit too.

II

How are we to use the Commandments?

The only thing that the Bible has to say about the preparation for Holy Com-

munion is, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat and drink." And your Prayer Book goes on to tell you to "examine your life by the rule of God's Commandments."

And so, when you are preparing to come to Holy Communion, take these Ten Commandments and examine your life and see where you stand when judged by this great moral law of humanity, something like this :

1st Commandment tells me that I must put God and God alone first in my life. Have I done so ?

2nd. Have I given God the best worship of which I am capable ?

3rd. Forbids irreverence, lying and swearing.

4th. How about Sunday ? Have I kept it as I should always ?

5th. Have I been obedient to my father and mother, and those to whom I owe obedience ?

6th. Have I been angry without a

cause ? Most murders have sprung from anger and hatred.

7th. Have I been pure ?

8th. Have I been strictly honest ?

9th. Have I gossiped about my neighbour ; told or listened to stories that were to their hurt ?

10th. Have I coveted other people's things ?

You see that is a pretty comprehensive law of life and conduct. By this law the grosser sins of murder, impurity, fornication and adultery are clearly forbidden, but also lesser one of swearing, lying, and anything in our lives, even the so-called respectable sins, which come between us and God.

It is a hard fight, but one which we *can* win through the help of the Incarnate Son of God. He will come at your prayer and dwell once again, as He did long ago, in a human body. "Christ in you," that is your hope. The old Israelites who first received the

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Ten Commandments knew nothing of this hope.

But “*we* know Him in Whom we have believed.” “We can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us.”

VI

SPECIFIC SINS AGAINST GOD'S LAW

- (i) IRREVERENCE, (ii) SWEARING AND
(iii) LYING

I WANT in this chapter to deal with more particular sins under the Vows of Renouncing about which I wrote in Chapter III. To-day, I want to speak about irreverence, swearing and lying. They come under the Third Commandment, viz. "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain."

It used to be the custom in early days, and indeed more or less in every land where faith was strong and vigorous, to speak much of the Deity and couple His Name with strong and solemn assertions of different kinds. For example, in Joseph's

time in Egypt, the usual solemn assertion was, "By the life of Pharaoh," or some such expression as that; and you will remember how commonly men in the Old Testament used to strengthen their statement by such expressions as, "As the Lord thy God liveth," etc. etc. Even God Himself is represented as saying, "By Myself have I sworn," and that custom has survived in our Law Courts down to this day. "I will tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God."

And so, to the old Israelite, this Commandment forbade all false swearing and perjury and linking of God's Name with vows or promises which he didn't intend to keep.

When our Lord came to earth, He took the Commandments and He told us that we must observe the Commandments in spirit as well as in letter, and so into the original meaning of the Commandment we have to read the interpretation of the

spirit of modern times, and we find that this Commandment forbids three things which are, alas, all too common to-day : irreverence, swearing and untruthfulness.

(1) First, the Commandment forbids all irreverence. Alas, there is too little reverence for anything to-day. Gone is much that our grandfathers used to reverence. Reverence to our parents, reverence to the church, aye, in some quarters reverence for the Eternal Son of God Himself.

In Germany, before the war, men had dared to criticize Jesus Christ a good deal more freely than they dared to criticize the Kaiser of Germany himself. If there are things we have revered unduly in the past, let us cease to reverence them. But beware of this tendency, for a life without something of mystery and reverence and awe is at best a poor and unhappy kind of one.

You think it perhaps a small thing to write in hymn books and prayer books, to talk and whisper and laugh in church ;

but beware, you are lessening the reverence due to holy things.

You think it funny perhaps to make jokes about Religion or the Bible, but again beware; those are the steps that break down reverence for God and His religion, and once reverence is gone, all the rest is likely soon to go.

See how careful we of the church are to try and teach you reverence. Watch your beautiful stately church with its reverent, dignified worship, with the subdued light stealing through stained glass windows, with the deep and solemn notes of the organ, with the care we take to try and stir the instinct of reverence in your heart every time that you enter these doors of the church.

I have been in churches where the atmosphere was such that it was nearly impossible to pray, and I have been in others where the people had been careful to keep silence and to preserve the atmosphere of prayer that belongs to God's

house, and I have found that I could be reverent and I could say my prayers in such an atmosphere as that.

Some wise old Saint of God, I know not who, when our church in Windsor was being built or decorated, chose a text and had it painted round the church there plain to see: "This is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of Heaven: let all the earth keep silence before Him." It teaches the lesson of reverence, and I pray God that that lesson may never be lost as long as this church of ours remains to try and teach it.

(2) In the second place the Commandment forbids swearing of all kinds. Though all swearing is bad, some is worse than others. So let me divide it into two: (a) Blasphemy and (b) ordinary swearing and cursing.

(a) I don't suppose anyone here to-day is guilty of Blasphemy, that is, using the Name of God or His Son Jesus Christ to garnish a vile story or a smutty jest.

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Surely no one who thinks would do a thing like that. We have all heard it sometimes, I fear, on the lips of men who never use the sacred name, except to curse and swear. The old monks who wrote the old MSS. of the Bible used when they came to the Name of God to lay aside their pen and take another one, which they reverently wiped and used only to write the Name of God. Surely theirs was a better way. You know the old church law that at the name of Jesus due reverence shall be made. You know our hymn,

“At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.”

Think of the gentle Christ hanging upon the cross, dead for your sins and mine ; and then can you dare to use His sacred Name to curse and swear by as if He were but a man and had done nothing for you ? Do you remember our Lord's terrible words, “Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men (if they repent), but the

blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven."

(b) The second kind of swearing is much more common. It consists in a great multitude of slang "cuss words," that we use to enliven our speech, because we think, rightly or wrongly, that the English language doesn't contain anything strong enough to express our feelings. Some of it is perhaps innocent enough. Some of it, besides being a useless offence against Christian charity, verges perilously close to blasphemy, for it is very often a prayer to the Devil or to God for harm to happen to someone with whom we happen to be fiercely angry just then. A man in a fit of rage tells another man to "go to Hell." He doesn't really mean it. The man won't go to Hell because you told him to go, but think of the terrible fate you have destined him to; think of the terrible powers you have lightly invoked. What if some day your jesting curse was taken literally and the

man was sent to Hell, or wherever you wanted him to go !

Some of you boys think that it is manly to swear a bit, because some older boy swears (and I have heard girls swear too). It is no such thing. Of all the contemptible idiots I know, the worst is the boy who thinks it manly to curse and swear and smoke cigarettes and lounge at the street corners insulting every girl that passes by. God keep you from such a manliness as that.

Some of you boys will probably be leaders in college, church, state, in the days to come. Get control of yourselves. Get control of the passions and appetites of your body and get control of your tongue ; so you will be the kind of men we need so badly in the world to-day.

(3) And the third thing the Commandment forbids is lying. We must tell the truth not only in the law courts on oath, but at all times. We always speak in the presence of God and it ought to be totally

unnecessary for us either to swear or to call God to witness that we are telling the truth, because our word alone ought to be as good as an oath. There is an old proverb somewhere, "A Christian man's word is his oath." That surely is the ideal for us all.

Sometimes one hears it said of someone, "Oh, he promised; he said he would do it, and I know he will." His word is enough. That man has gained his reward. People know that they can trust him and his word, even though he doesn't curse and swear to prove his case. So make few promises, but if you do make them, stick to them at all costs and carry out your promises, if at all possible, cost what it may.

People enter into promises and vows far too lightly to-day. Two people promise, with very little thought, before God to be true to each other as long as they both shall live. And at the first passing whim of anger and fancy they try and

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break the promise they have made, and they cast hard words at us of the Church because we refuse to allow divorce ; and they think that God is deaf and unseeing and they go and commit sin and they think God has forgotten, because the punishment doesn't fall at once, but

“ Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small ;
Though with patience He stands waiting,
With exactness grinds He all.”

Tell the truth at all costs. God hears every word you say. It is generally when you are telling lies that you have to back it up by swearing—like St. Peter who, after he had told a lie, began to curse and swear, saying, “ I know not the Man.”

Boys and girls, try and learn to be reverent. Try and learn to see God and His works in nature and in every thing about you. Learn to control that unruly tongue of yours, and when you are tempted

to swear, think of the long list that you are adding to of the sins of hand and eye and tongue for which you must some day give account before the judgment seat of God.

I can remember the day at school that I first in a fit of anger swore at another boy who had offended me. And though I suppose it is at least twenty-five years ago, the memory of that has haunted me to this day. If the judgment day means simply the unrolling of the records of conscience, such as that, the bringing to light of all these sins of my past life (that conscience has kept note of), it will be all the judgment I want.

“ When the ghosts of forgotten actions
Come floating before my sight,
And things that I thought were dead things
Come alive with a terrible might,
And I know of that future judgment, how awful
soe’er it be,
That to sit alone with my conscience
Will be judgment enough for me.”

VII

SPECIFIC SINS AGAINST GOD'S LAW

(ii) IMPURITY

[NOTE.—This is the most difficult of the Confirmation lessons and requires much thought and sympathy and careful preparation. It should, of course, be taught in separate classes, boys and girls. No man can write this lesson to suit another teacher. So I have just inserted my own teaching in a sermon preached to a congregation of boys and girls at the closing of the Edgehill and King's College Schools, Nova Scotia.]

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.”—Gen. i. 27.

You will probably say : “ Well, that is a queer text for a Closing Sunday sermon ! ” Let me try and explain the thoughts that I have been thinking this last week.

To me, anyway, there is something very stirring and impressive in the close of a school year. All over the land, just about this time, hundreds of boys and girls are packing up their trunks and suit-cases, getting ready to go home for the holidays. Many are leaving school for the last time. The schools are putting up their shutters and locking the doors and closing down. Like great factories, they are pouring out into the greater life of the nation their more or less finished product—boys and girls—the hope of the future—the Salvation of the Nation.

Before me sit to-day in your school ranks future business men, lawyers, doctors and, please God, perhaps future bishops and clergy of the Church.

Before me, in your Edgehill ranks, sit

future mothers of the race—girls who are going to make good in many an important walk of life. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be,” wrote St. John, and there is no telling what possibilities lie before this crowd of boys and girls now. Many of them are come to the first big break in life—the end of their life at school. Remember, brethren, it is our schools that are making the nation. They are moulding your children’s lives for better or for worse. Are our schools lacking in discipline? Are they lacking in high tone and morals? Then, to a large extent, the future nation will be the same.

I

Now, there are many things that I might speak to you about to-day, but I am going to speak to you about a very serious and difficult problem, the problem of purity and right living. And

I am not going to mince matters ! I am going to speak straight to you who are leaving school. With many of you it will be my last chance. It is better to warn than to rescue you. It is better to prevent evil than have to cure it. A fence at the top of a cliff is far more use than an ambulance or Red Cross unit at the bottom.

It is a hard task, after the comparatively simple life of school, to adjust yourself to new conditions and new life. At school your time was mostly ordered for you, according to strict time-table and discipline. In the greater world outside school your time is, to a much larger extent, your own to use or to misuse as you see fit. There are many other things that you will have to adjust to meet new conditions. But I do not think that there is anything harder to learn in the days after school than the new relationship which you have to learn towards the other sex—to the girls or women, to the

boys and men with whom you will have to come in contact in college life, in social life and in business life (for, as you know, a large percentage of our modern business office staffs are made up of women and girls).

While you were a boy—a girl—at home or at school, intercourse with the other sex was—and rightly so—very largely barred. After you leave school nowadays there is practically no bar at all. I want you to think to-day very seriously about the relationship of boy and girl after school days are over, for it is a relationship fraught with wonderful possibilities and also with serious dangers.

II

Let me speak first to the boys :

1. Remember, your body is the temple—the “dwelling place of the Holy Ghost.” When I was a boy I had a little green-

covered book called *The House I Live in*. It told of the wonderful body, or house, in which I live. It described its wonderful machinery and the marvellous mechanism of its parts, and it impressed on me this lesson: that "I" am not my body (for the body, doctors tell us, changes every seven years), but I am just the tenant living in the house of the body. The real "you" is not your body, but lives within, looking out at me through your eyes, listening to me through your ears; and when my tenancy of this house is over I shall lay it aside in the cemetery, for "I," the real "I," the tenant, have still before me the glorious adventure of the Hereafter life—that life for which this life is but the preparation.

As I grew older there came to me another thought—the great truth of the Incarnation; what St. John meant when he said: "The Word (i.e. Jesus Christ) became flesh and dwelt among us"—that is, the Son of God came down to live

in a human body like you and me. The body, therefore—the house I live in—was also the house Christ lived in. Every part of the human body is holy, because He once lived in it. That hand of yours is almost exactly as Jesus Christ's was. With a hand no different to that He touched the blind, the sick, the dead, and restored them. His hand was ever an instrument of good. It was never lifted in passion ; it never struck a hasty blow ; it never tampered with sin in any form ; it was at last nailed to the cross for us men and for our salvation. Your hand is, therefore, a sacred thing, yet some boys and men use it to abuse and defile and eventually to wreck that human body which He once hallowed with His presence when He was here on earth. Those ears of yours, with which the Master used to listen to the cry of those who needed Him so sorely, are used to listen to the blasphemous word or the vile story or the smutty jest. The eyes with

which He used to beam compassion are used to look on sights and pictures which often inflame the passions and lead to sin. The lips with which He spoke His divine blessings are used by some to suggest sin to those who are younger than themselves, and all the time the heart—because the heart of Christ was a human heart—is hardening and blackening and is being brought to love that which it ought to hate. Out of the heart that ought to be pure vices unspeakable must inevitably spring.

And so a boy, through his own ignorance, or through his deliberate sin, can misuse that marvellous body of his that was made in the image of God and which Jesus Christ hallowed by His presence when He was here on earth.

2. Now, the second thing is this: Students of boyhood tell us—and one's own experience confirms it—that, up to a certain age, a boy has little or no use for girls. True, sister was of some use some-

times, to give you a bite of her apple or her chocolate, or find something which you, boylike and manlike, had succeeded in losing; but you were not interested, and rather scorned girls when you were a "kid." They were, in your eyes, an inferior order of beings. But, somewhere about sixteen years of age, a boy's ideas change considerably, and he begins to respect and admire and look up to the very sex that once he despised. For many the most interesting fact about the world is that the other sex is in it also. It is all God's will for you that your ideas in this respect should change. The free companionship between boy and girl, so characteristic of our Canadian life, is a good thing, provided always that thoughts and ideals are kept high and pure. You will meet in after-life men and boys whom you would have been far better never to have known at all. You cannot avoid meeting them sometimes, but see to it that no vile story or viler jest is ever told

in your presence against any woman or girl, whoever she may be. "What are you to do?" you say. You can protest to him who tells the story; you can walk away; you have two fists and he has two eyes, and two black eyes delivered by you is an argument for purity on behalf of the Church Militant that is very hard to beat.

Speak reverently, think reverently, act reverently towards the girls and women with whom you come in contact, for there is nothing so sacred as a woman, except, perhaps, a little baby and God Himself.

You will be anxious to know many things as you grow older about the mysteries of life and sex. Remember that curiosity has killed more than the cat. Your curiosity unsatisfied may lead you wrong. Get your information from your father, or your parish priest, or some wise friend whom you can trust, and not from some rough, coarse companion on your way

through life. . . . I have bitter memories of companions of my boyhood that taught me things that it will take me a whole lifetime to eradicate and forget.

Your mother bore you for nine long months in her body, beneath her heart. She gave you her life-blood ; she gave you everything she possessed ; she suffered terribly ; she went down into the Valley of the Shadow to bring you into the world and she only just came back, and you are a miserable cur if you stand by tamely and hear a vile story told or an insult offered to that gentler, weaker sex to which Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and your own mother belong.

Remember, too (it is a big thought for a schoolboy), that God Almighty has entrusted to each one of you boys the seed of a future man to come from you. He gave it to your father and to his father before him, and so on, right back to the beginning of time. It is a sacred

trust from God. We deal very hardly with people in other walks of life who waste or misuse or abuse trusts of any kind. And nature will deal sternly with you if you betray this God-given trust. You will be often tempted to waste or to misuse it, but, for the sake of the future, for the sake of her to whom you must some day pass it on, for the sake of the son who must succeed you as you succeeded your father, you must preserve this trust of yours, pure and untarnished, as it came forth from God.

And I am not afraid to say, as I have said before to you boys as you leave school: Pray for your future wife. She is somewhere learning, still in childhood, life's duties and life's responsibilities. She has as much right to expect at God's altar a pure man as you have to expect a pure woman.

III

As far as you girls leaving school are concerned, your problem is, in some respects, the same. Your task just now is the task of "accepting yourselves as women," with all that involves and implies. Among other things, you are beginning to be conscious of a new-found power over men and boys. You have seen a little baby, a funny, fat, laughing little thing, trying to learn to walk. He catches hold of the chairs and tables to pull himself up to his feet and then he tries to walk and staggers, giggling, into his mother's arms. It is a new power to him, and he is tremendously interested in it and practises it on all possible occasions. So the girl, especially the beautiful girl, leaving school becomes conscious of a new-found power over men. You can, if you will, use your power to induce men to make fools of themselves. Keep them at a distance. A kiss of which you

think nothing may rouse tempests in a man that all the kisses in the world will not assuage. You can let yourself slip into the habit of living on admiration and flattery, for people will forgive much to a girl, especially if she is pretty. And if you misuse this power that God has given you, you have sown the wind and you will reap the whirlwind by losing this power which you didn't know how to use.

That doesn't mean that you are to give up parties and picnics and tennis and teas where men are. God forbid! If you did you would be running away from the very place where God wants you to be. He fitted you by your gracious manners, by your presence, by your very weakness, to work untold good among men in those very circles of society in which many of you girls will have to move. It is a true saying that "society never rises above the level of its women." The men of any community are very largely what the

women make them. Have the women high ideals of life, the men will have the same ; are the women careless and indifferent about higher things, the men will be the same. You girls can set the level of society where you like. And if we have succeeded in teaching you high ideals, then the future of society is safe. For the salvation of the nation lies very largely in your hands. Oh ! I beseech you—you who are to be the mothers of a nation yet unborn—preserve your humility and modesty ! Do not tamper with, do not misuse, this wonderful power you have over men ; use it for the highest things. Here is a boy friend of yours slipping into some serious sin. He is only nineteen. The temptation comes very suddenly, and the boy's Bible, his Sacraments and his God seem very far away, but you are not far away, and often the boy is only saved by the thought of you, his girl friend, and what you would think. That thought saves him, and that is the influence that

God Almighty wants you girls to exercise all the days of your life.

Some day, for most of you girls, God will send into your life the man whom He intends to be your husband. He will do anything for you. You can make him or mar him by your influence. Some day it will be yours to see the little children playing about your home. Remember, you can mould those children almost as you will. As you are to-day, so in a large measure they will be through the wonderful, but terrible, law of heredity. And your influence can thus be extended almost indefinitely to the end of time.

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,” said our Lord. It is by the personal influence of good men and women that the world is very largely saved, especially good women, because they are to be the mothers of the race. As Browning puts it in his picture of his ideal woman and her influence, which I have quoted to you here more than once: “She never

Specific Sins Against God's Law :

found fault with you ; never implied your wrong by her right. Yet men at her side grew nobler, girls purer. None knelt at her feet. They knelt more to God than they used, that was all."

Oh ! I beseech you ! honour and respect this body of yours. It is the house in which the eternal Son of God lived when He was here on earth, and with which He has ascended to His Father until He come again to judge the world, when every one of us shall give account (mark you !) of the "deeds done in the body." Your body is as sacred as your soul. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Keep before you the image of the high-souled, pure-minded Son of God as He went through life ; Who was a boy and then a man ; Who had to face all the temptations of the body, which you and I have to face ; "Who was in all points tempted, like as you are, yet without sin."

Pray Him to come again and live in a

human body and He will come. Some of us can testify to that. "Christ IN you" is the secret of purity. And so you will be the man or woman whom God meant you to be; and it will be written of you, as it was of that gallant knight, Sir Galahad : "His strength is as the strength of ten, because his heart is pure."

VIII

THE RULE OF A CHURCHMAN'S LIFE

I WANT to talk to you in this chapter about what I call the "Rule of a Churchman's Life."

We talk far too loosely and vaguely about our religion. We say pious words about loving God and loving our neighbour, without meaning them very much. And we do well to remember that you and I, as members of the Church of God, have definite religious duties to perform. And after your Confirmation, you must remember these duties and DO THEM.

After your Confirmation the hardest thing for you to do will be to "persevere" to "keep it up" week after week, month after month, and a "Rule of life" is going to help you very much. Now what is the rule of a Churchman's life ?

The Rule of a Churchman's Life

1. *First, surely, that he should say his prayers morning and evening.*

I find from my experience of Confirmation candidates that a very great number of boys and girls do not say their prayers in the morning. (Generally because they don't get up in time !)

I don't like to make distinctions, but I think that our morning prayers are more important. In the evening I am going to bed to sleep (I hope). True, danger may come. The house may catch fire. I may become suddenly ill. And so I pray, "Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord, and of Thy great mercy defend us from all the perils and dangers of this night for the love of Thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ." I should confess my sins of the day, and I should thank Him for His mercies to me during the day. I know I should do that, but in the morning I am going out to a day with all the many and varied temptations that may come my way. Temptation to

evil thoughts, to bad temper, unkindness. Who does not know from bitter experience what may come our way during the day? Surely, we need our morning prayers to begin the day with God. Surely, if any prayers are to be omitted it should not be those which consecrate the morning hours to God.

2. Secondly, that he should read his Bible.

Alas, all too few read the Bible nowadays for themselves. They say, "Oh, we come to Church and hear the Epistles and Gospels and lessons read." That, of course, is excellent, but even if you came to Church three times a Sunday for a whole year without ever missing, you would only hear a comparatively small portion of the Bible. Nothing can ever quite take the place of the regular private reading of the Word of God. Put your Bible and your Prayer Book together by your bedside and when you say your prayers at night try and get into the habit

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of reading carefully and prayerfully at least a few verses of God's Holy Word.

3. That he should go to Church regularly, at the very least, once a Sunday.

One would think that it would hardly be necessary to put this in, but it is very necessary. Our Roman Catholic brethren have done better than we have in teaching that to omit regular attendance at Church is a definite sin of disrespect and dishonour to God, and ought to be confessed with shame and sorrow to God Himself.

We have far too much of this careless running off for a day's motoring or pleasure, without ever a thought of God or Church or of religious duties of any kind.

After you have observed your religious duties, been to church, made your communion, paid at least some respect and honour to Him whose day it is, then I do not see much difference between going for a motor drive and going for a walk on Sunday afternoon. But first things must be put first. You must see to it

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in your observance of Sunday that the proper attendance at the worship of the Church is not forgotten.

4. Must be a regular communicant.

Everything depends on this. As I look back over the lists of Confirmation candidates in the former years, I find that it is the regular communicants who have preserved, and have succeeded in, the Christian life. As long as I know that you are coming regularly to your Holy Communion after your Confirmation, I will not worry about you very much. Your watch won't go for ever without winding up. Neither will your life, and the regular coming to Holy Communion after careful preparation will (apart altogether from the great Sacramental gift of Holy Communion) do a great deal to keep your life straight and to keep you from "drifting," which is perhaps the worst temptation that you will have to fight after you are confirmed.

5. Will support his Church.

You would be very much offended if I

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said that you would sit on the street corners with a little tin cup and ask for coppers from the passers-by. You would say, "I'd never accept charity." I hope you wouldn't, but some people do nearly as bad. They accept charity in this way—they let other people pay for the work of the Church of God. That isn't fair! You must not accept charity in this way. You must do your share.

When you are older and working you will be in receipt of a salary of some kind. You will have to lay aside so much for rent and so much for board and so much for clothes. You must also lay aside a fair share for God and His work. You can do the same now with your pocket money that your parents give you.

By far the best way is by using the Duplex envelopes which most parishes use nowadays. Get a set from the Wardens of the Parish or from your Sunday School Treasurer, and **USE THEM!**

6. *Will work for his Church.*

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No Christian life is complete without service. You have got to express your Christianity in work for God.

Drones are little use in a beehive. After their usefulness is over they are, I believe, driven out or killed by the other bees. Don't be a drone. Don't be a useless member of God's Church.

I think the most important work for any layman or woman is to try to help individual comrades and friends whom the clergy can hardly ever reach. If a friend is beginning to neglect his religious life or to acquire some evil habit, there is no one who will have more influence than you, his friend, and you are no true friend if you neglect that. Pray for him. Try humbly and modestly to influence him. Many a one who has not the qualifications for other church work may do here the most valuable of all work.

We want men for the Ministry, men and women for Social Service and work in the Mission Field. Your parish needs

The Rule of a Churchman's Life

help in the Sunday School, in the choir, in the various Parish Guilds. The Rector cannot do it all. Give him, poor man, the help of your prayers and your support.

Let me sum up : This is the rule of a Churchman's life :

1. He must say his prayers.
2. He must read his Bible.
3. He must go to Church.
4. He must be a regular communicant.
5. He must support his Church.
6. He must work for his Church.

And if when you and I get to the end of this little life on earth, we can say, " Well, I have kept fairly well the six rules of a Churchman's life," then I think that you and I will not have done so very badly with the life that Almighty God entrusted to our care.

IX

OUR PRAYERS

I WANT to speak to you in this chapter about saying our prayers, and it is some comfort to feel that I don't have to be an expert myself to speak about these things. The experience of one soul who is at least trying ought to be able to help you too.

Neither do I want to justify prayer. There is no need for that either. Many people write books about prayers, as to why we should pray or why we should not pray, and yet having heard all the reasons why they should not pray the fact remains that in time of crisis men do pray. "Do you ever pray?" a chaplain asked a young soldier during the war. "Sometimes," he said. "I prayed last night when we took Vimy Ridge. I guess everybody prayed then." "I had not

Our Prayers

prayed for years," said a railroad man whose train had only just escaped a wreck, "but I tell you I prayed then."

You see we are instinctively praying creatures, and a big crisis shakes the prayer spirit loose.

I

Now think about prayer—just why should we pray at all? The best answer probably is, *In order that we may get to know God.* You cannot love God, you cannot be keen on Him and His blessed purpose for the world, unless you know Him, and the better you know Him the keener will you be on Him and on His work.

Now, how are you going to get to know Him? You can only do it in the same way as you get to know any human friend of yours—by *talking* to Him and He to you. For example, someone moves into the house next door to you. You see the

furniture arriving and you begin to see the family about the place. And you begin to know what they look like, and indeed if anyone were to ask you, "Do you know the Smith family?" you would say, "Oh yes, I know them *by sight*." That is as far as you could go.

How did you get to know them, then? The answer is simple. You got to know them by talking to them and they to you. One day you found that the children of the family went to your school and you walked to school with them, talking as you went. You got to know them by *talking*, by conveying ideas from you to them. And the more you talked with them, the better you got to know them, until you became very good friends indeed.

Now transfer that idea to religion. I can only be keen on God by knowing Him. I can only get to know Him by talking to Him, and that talking we call prayer. And so prayer is talking to God, not so

much asking Him for things we want—that is only a small part of prayer. Prayer is talking to God about anything that interests me—my work, my pleasure, my home, those I love, sure and certain of one thing, that what interests me interests also my Father Who is in Heaven. I read once of a small boy at an English school who was captain of his school cricket team. They were playing a match which this boy especially wanted to win. Everything, however, seemed to go against his team. And the other side were slowly but surely winning. Suddenly this boy gave the ball to another and disappeared, and, says his friend, who told the story, “we found him in the club house in a corner kneeling and praying to God that our side might win.” You may smile at that boy’s action. I don’t. I don’t think it is the right sort of prayer, for one has no right to ask favouritism from God against the other side. But that boy had learned one great lesson, that there

Our Prayers

is no event, no joy, no sorrow, in our life, too small to bring in prayer to our kindly, loving, sympathetic Lord.

II

But there is also the other side of prayer. It is not quite true to say that you got to know the family next door simply because you talked with them. They had to talk with you. Two persons get to know each other by mutual intercourse. So when I speak to God in prayer He speaks back to me, and we have got to remember that and give Him a chance to speak. "I think," said an old priest once, "that one's prayers are sometimes like a political meeting. We talk too much and we don't give anyone else a chance." Give God the opportunity to speak to you. God speaks to me in the glories of nature, in the pages of the Bible, in the recesses of conscience and the soul as He did to Samuel, St. Peter on the

housetop, St. John on the lonely island of Patmos.

You can only fully learn of this by experience as you grow older, but even some of us can tell you, however feebly and imperfectly, that to the boy or girl or man or woman who perseveres in speaking to God, God will speak back as clearly and as unmistakably as I am now speaking to you.

III

Now then, go a step further. When and where should you pray? I suppose most of us would answer that we ought to pray morning and evening. True, we do not always do it in the morning, but we all recognize it as what should be done—morning and evening prayers. In the morning, after you are dressed and before you go down to breakfast, give God His minute. In the evening, when you first go to your room and before you undress,

Our Prayers

give Him some more of yourself. These little periods of the day are most important. Try and see that they are never forgotten or ignored.

Where should you say your prayers?

I suppose it will be in your room. If you live near a church it will help you to say your prayers there too. If possible have a definite place to say them. *Not your bedside.* I am afraid it makes you sleepy. Best of all have a little prayer desk or even a table on which you keep your Bible, Prayer Book, etc., and from which you keep everything else. If you can put over it a picture of our Lord, or a cross or a crucifix, it will make an atmosphere about your little prayer corner that will help you enormously and make it far easier to pray. You cannot if you have a heart pray carelessly before a crucifix on which hangs a little picture of the Crucified Redeemer of the World—the Christ Who died for you and me.

IV

Finally, what kind of prayers should you say ?

1st in the morning. Remember always that quality is better than quantity. A few minutes of real earnest prayer is worth far more than half an hour's hurried or unreal or formal prayers.

I suggest the following as the least that you can do in the morning :

1. Kneel down (and if such be your custom) make the sign of the cross and say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Try and realize the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Say to yourself :

He is really here beside me,

He can hear me,

He knows me through and through,

He wants to help me and He will.

2. *Look forward into the day* and say :
O God, help me this day to do only that which pleases Thee. Amen.

3. Think of your friends and say : O God, keep me this day and all those I love safe from all harm, both in body and soul. Amen.

4. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us all evermore. Amen.

I repeat, don't make your rule include too much. But be sure you carry it out. It will send you downstairs and out into the world like a man.

In the evening you will probably have more time. I suggest the following :

1. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen (as in the morning).

2. *Thanksgiving*. My God, I thank Thee for all the blessings of this day, especially for . . . Help me always to show my thankfulness by trying in all things to please Thee. Amen.

3. Look back over the day and examine your day. (Think hard.)

Did I say my prayers in the morning? Have I been obedient? Have I done anything wrong in thought? in word? in deed? Have I failed in any known duty? Then say: "I confess to God Almighty that I have sinned in thought, word and deed, especially . . . for these and all my other sins I am heartily sorry. I firmly purpose to do better and ask God to have mercy. May the Almighty and merciful God grant me pardon, absolution and remission of all my sins. Amen.

4. Our Father, etc.

5. Then pray for the family, the Church, everything and everyone you want to include. Put in all your own little problems. Don't hurry, you have plenty of time.

Here is an excellent little prayer from that admirable book, *Helps to Worship*, which you can use:

"Have mercy, O most gracious God, upon all men. Bless especially my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, my rela-

tions and friends, and all whom I love or who are kind to me. Bless also the clergy of this parish. Have pity upon the sick and suffering. Give us food and clothing, keep us in good health, comfort us in all our troubles, make us please Thee in all we do, and bring us safe at last to our home in Heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Or perhaps you can use this little prayer :

"Visit, O Lord, I beseech Thee, this home with Thy love and favour; Drive far from it all the snares of the enemy, let Thy Holy Angels abide in it to preserve us in peace and let Thy blessing be ever upon us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

6. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.

There is nothing to be ashamed of, boys and girls, in saying your prayers. The best men and women in the world : General Gordon, Lord Roberts, Marshal Foch,

Florence Nightingale, all said their prayers and were not ashamed that people should know it; and one of the finest stories of the great war is the story of the little church behind the French lines where Marshal Foch used to go and pray each day and plan out his campaign in the presence of God.

Remember, religion soon lags without keenness and interest. Keenness is only got by knowing God. Knowledge of God is only got by talking to Him and He to me. That talking we call Prayer.

That is why I want you to take trouble with your prayers, *in order that you and I may get to know God*. That is the most important thing in the world, to *know God*.

“ More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of . . .
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

X

OUR BIBLE READING

LET me speak next of our private Bible reading, which ought to be the inseparable companion of our daily prayers. And again I do it with all diffidence, because I fear I am not very good at reading my own Bible. But I know something of the difficulties and perhaps my experience may be of some use to you.

I

But before I speak of Bible reading let me speak of novel reading and reading in general. You say, "What has that got to do with Bible reading?" I reply, "It has a great deal to do with it," and I should be very foolish if I didn't know that there is a good deal more reading of

books and novels than there is reading of the Bible.

We boast that we live in the days of the "open Bible" and the "teaching pulpit." But the open Bible is often unread and the "teaching pulpit" is often very uninteresting and dull, and so a great many people pick up their notions of life, and morality, and ethics, from the latest novel or magazine article. The author of a clever, well-written novel has an enormous audience, sometimes 100,000 people or more, and no preacher or teacher, however great and famous, can hope to influence public opinion to such an extent as that. And so there is a very real necessity nowadays to keep up the tone of public opinion, and to keep the standard of modern literature and fiction as high as possible.

You can easily see the reason for it. To a large extent we live in the books that we read. A thrilling book has an influence on us for better or for worse that some of us have hardly any idea of at all. Which

of us has not seen a boy deep in some great story of adventure. His eye is bright, his cheek is flushed ; he is living with his hero in the story, standing with him on the deck of his ship, charging beside him into the battle ; playing beside him in the match ; and, to a very large extent, he will think and say what his hero thinks and does and says. I can remember in the case of my young brother weird epidemics of slang that he used and strange things that he suddenly began to do, which we finally traced to some of the books which he had been reading. And we older people are influenced in a similar way by the books we read. And, therefore, just as it is a disaster of the worst kind for any of us, especially a boy or girl, to spend their time in bad and evil company, so it is a tragedy for us to read bad books that pull down our ideals and debase our morals. And bad books will do so unless we keep our ideals high by prayer and by the study of God's Holy Word.

II

Now let me pass to Bible reading. I have told you that what we need in our religion is keenness and interest, and we cannot be keen on a God whom we do not know. Then let us talk to Him in prayer. Let us read about Him in the Bible. Because thus we shall get to know Him, and that is the one great object of our religion, to get to know God.

And again, the man or woman who never reads the Bible misses the messages that God undoubtedly does send to us out of the pages of the Bible, to guide and direct our life. I read the other day a true story of an old widow lady during the war days, whose dearest son had enlisted. One night late she received a cable to say that he had been wounded. That was all. It didn't say whether it was serious or not. Long into the night she sat by the fire in keen torment and agony. At last, because she was a good

Christian woman, she said to herself that she was not trusting God, and so she picked up her Bible and read her portion according to her daily practice. In her portion came the words: "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," and she said, "Now will I trust God on those words and go to bed." She did, and the next morning came a letter from her boy to say that after all the wound was only slight.

Had she not read her Bible she would have worried all through the night. See what her Bible reading meant to her. And see what you and I must often miss because we do not read our Bibles as we should.

III

Why don't we read our Bibles more than we do? For I fear there is little doubt that people do not now read their Bibles as they once did. I do not know

exactly, but I think there are three reasons anyway :

1. Because we have simply never formed the habit.

2. Because we think that it is a dull book about a race of people (the Jews) whom we do not like, and therefore we are not anxious to read it.

Yet nowhere in the whole range of literature are there such high flights of oratory, such depth of passion and emotion, such insight into the mysteries of human nature as there are in the Bible. Rightly understood there is no literature like it.

3. But the real reason is probably because we don't know how to read it. We either read at haphazard, just as the book happens to open, or we read irregularly, or else we read a piece out of the context, or we read through mechanically, four or five verses a day, jumbling prose and verse, liturgical directions and genealogical tree together in hopeless confusion.

Our Bible Reading

You would not treat any other set of books like that. Is it any wonder that your Bible reading is flat and stale and hopelessly unprofitable ?

IV

I don't quite know what is the best way for the average person to read the Bible. Some people have a good deal of time and study the Bible book by book. An excellent method if you have the time. But what about the people who have neither the time nor the energy to do that ? Well, you have, I suppose, always a Prayer Book with you. You can follow the course of lessons in the tables in the front of your Prayer Book. But most people find them too long. Or you can read according to the excellent Canadian Church Calendar with its daily Bible reading portion which is published every year. Or you can use the excellent little *Salvation Army Soldier's Guide*, which

Our Bible Reading

costs very little and gives definite readings for every day in the year.

But I think your best plan would be to take for general use one of the Gospels, preferably St. Mark as the shortest and simplest. Find out all you can about the writer of the Gospel and how he got his material and everything that will help to make the Gospel more interesting, and then put your Bible with your Prayer Book by your bedside, or wherever you say your prayers, and try to read a few verses every night as carefully as possible. Then take the other Gospels in like manner; then the Acts of the Apostles. Then perhaps you will be ready for the Epistles, which are much harder.

v

Finally, let me remind you that the secret of all pleasurable reading is to use your imagination—to “put yourself in his place.” Think yourself into the story

you are reading. Imagine that you are one of the crowd pressing round the Master the day He went to heal the daughter of Jairus. Try and make yourself one of the crowd walking with Him from Bethany to Jerusalem the first Palm Sunday, shouting "Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." You are one of the crowd watching in utter helplessness the great tragedy of the crucifixion. Read St. Paul's Epistles and try to get in touch with this man, whose one thought was to serve his Lord and to spread the Gospel. Read his letters and try and sympathize with him in all his anxiety and trouble over these wretched converts at Corinth, who nearly broke his heart. Use your imagination and your Bible reading will take on a new vividness and pleasure every day.

VI

Finally, if you succeed you must read your Bible—

1. *Regularly*.—Irregularity will kill anything in time. The best story in the world, if read at long intervals in fits and starts as the spirit moves you, would soon turn out to be very wearisome reading indeed.

2. *Practically*.—By that I mean find out all you can about the writer and his book, and when God reveals His will to you in the pages of the Bible turn your meditation into a prayer to God: e.g. you have been reading the story of how our Lord used the loaves and fishes of one small boy to feed many. Remember that he can use even our little endeavours in His service, and make your prayer like this: “O God, like this little boy I can do little, but help me, Lord, to do what I can to be of service in the carrying out of Thy blessed purposes here on earth.”

So your Bible reading will be a real conversation or communion with God.

3. *Prayerfully*.—Must I add that you should study prayerfully? Pray before you

read some such prayer as this : “ Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.”

To sum up: Your life and mine are going to be very seriously the losers if we do not know our Bibles. You say you “ hear the Bible read in Church.” Surely, but even if you come every Sunday morning and evening for a year you only hear a small portion of it at most. You say you “ hear it read at daily prayers in school.” Yes, but you will not be at school all your life. We want you to form habits now that will be yours all your life long, and never forget that your great need and mine is to know Jesus Christ.

How can you know Him if you never read about Him in His Holy Word ?

XI

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

TO-DAY I want to speak to you about how you should prepare for Holy Communion.

You can, I am sure, see that some preparation is necessary. If you were invited to dine with King George of England how you would prepare yourself! How much more should you prepare yourself when you are coming to meet our Lord in His appointed feast of the Holy Communion!

I

Now if there is one doctrine above all others to which the Church is pledged it is this—that sin is very hateful in the eyes of God and that sin persisted in and

unrepented of is the worst kind of barrier between us and God, and is the greatest obstacle to worship and communion with Him. I have told you more than once of how, when I was a little boy, I told my mother a lie. She didn't find me out, and though it is something like thirty years ago I can remember how my sin raised a barrier between me and her. I could not look her in the face. I didn't want to be in her presence as I had always loved to be before. I was afraid, for "conscience doth make cowards of us all." You see the steps are perfectly clear :

1. The lie was told. A sin was committed.

2. The result was the raising of a barrier between me and my mother.

3. That barrier remained until I went to my mother and confessed my sin.

4. She forgave me, and though I suffered (as everyone suffers in character who commits sin), yet the barrier was removed

Preparation for Holy Communion

and the old feeling between us was restored.

It is the same between God and us. Our sins and those barriers remain until we confess our sins to God and receive His forgiveness.

You will notice that the Prayer Book bears this out. Morning and evening prayer always begin with sentences of humility, penitence and sorrow for sin and God's attitude to the penitent sinner. Then follows the confession of our sins and the public pronouncing of God's forgiveness. Holy Communion begins with a prayer for purity and the reading of the Ten Commandments and gradually works up to the Confession and the Absolution. The teaching of the Prayer Book is quite clear. Confession of sins must come first to clear the way for the worship of God. No one should come to worship God with his sins unconfessed—that is, if he would worship God aright and see His face. We might sum up the teaching of the

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Prayer Book on preparation for Holy Communion in the words of the Bible itself: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

II

The Bible itself has only one thing to say about preparing for Holy Communion. St. Paul says, "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the Bread and drink of the Cup." And the Church Catechism goes on further to tell you to examine yourself as to whether :

1. You repent of your sins.
2. You have a living faith in God's mercy through Christ.
3. You are in charity with all men.

That is, we should examine ourselves to see if we are sorry for what we have done wrong, have faith in Jesus Christ and if we have made up our quarrels.

Preparation for Holy Communion

Clearly you have to examine yourself to find out what your sins are before you can repent of them. And you can, I imagine, see that if you have had a bad quarrel with someone you should try and make it up before you come to Holy Communion. Quarrels are very foolish things. I know two families in my parish who live in a little clearing in the woods about half a mile from the nearest house. Their houses are about five hundred yards apart. Something like fifteen years ago they quarrelled over something, and I believe they have not spoken since! So do not let quarrels last. Do at least your share (and a little bit more) to make the quarrel up. See that the continuance of the quarrel is not your fault. No one should come to the Holy Communion with a bitter quarrel not made up. If the other person will not accept your advances, then the blame for the continuance of the quarrel is not yours but his. You can come. You have tried to end

the quarrel. He had better stay away until he is in a better mood.

III

Now, then, if self-examination and confession of our sins to God are necessary to prepare for Holy Communion, how should it be done?

It is not a very easy matter, because we find it hard to judge ourselves. We are most of us expert enough at judging other people. Very few of us know how to judge ourselves. Do you remember the story in 2 Sam. xii. 1-7? David could only be angry at his own sin when told to him by Nathan of another man. Then he cried out, "The man that did this shall surely die." "Yes," said the old prophet, "thou art the man." And the king saw then. "Oh," he said, "I have sinned against the Lord."

That is our trouble. We call a sin by one name when we do it ourselves, and

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by another name when someone else does it. What I call "rashness" in another I call "courage" when the deed is mine. What I call "stinginess" in another I call "prudence" when the deed is mine. What I call "gossip" and "uncharitableness" I call "keen judgment" when I am speaking of myself. What I call "revengefulness" in another I call "high spirit" in myself, and so on. If we want to know exactly where we stand we have got to judge ourselves as sternly as we judge other people.

But how are you going to do it? We have not yet answered that question. If you have one of those little books of devotion such as *Helps to Worship* you will find a lot of questions which are meant to guide you in your self-examination. Wisely and faithfully carried out that ought to be a very excellent plan. Or, at another time you might use the Ten Commandments to guide you. See whether you can answer "not guilty" to

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each one of them. Or you might use “The Duty to God” and “Duty to your Neighbour.” Or you might use the six rules of a Churchman’s life which I have told you of in Chapter VIII. Any of these methods will help you very much. But perhaps even then you are not satisfied; perhaps for one reason or another you are not sure whether you ought to come to Holy Communion. Then I would remind you of the wise words of one of the Exhortations in the Communion office in your Prayer Book spoken by the priest to the people.

“And because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion but with a full trust in God’s mercy and with a quiet conscience, therefore if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God’s Word and open his grief, that by

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the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly [i.e. spiritual] counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness," which simply means that the Church has sent your rector into your parish to help you. Go and see him and ask him to help you, and, if necessary, confess your sins to God in his presence and receive God's forgiveness. It is, above all things, necessary that you should come to your Holy Communion WHITE, Let no unconfessed sin at that time especially come between you and God.

As I close, let me remind you again why we ask you to prepare yourself for Holy Communion. If Holy Communion were simply and solely a common meal to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ, then I suppose solemn and careful preparation would matter less. But since, as we believe and know, Jesus Christ comes to us in the Holy Communion in

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very presence as He was with the disciples long ago on the hills of Galilee—since He comes to feed you and me with His Body and His Blood—and nothing less is the teaching of the Church—then as you would prepare your house to receive the King of England were he to come to visit you to-day, so prepare, as best you can, your soul to receive the King of Kings.

I don't want to frighten you, but do not make light of the sacred duty of preparation. For there at the Altar we receive His Body and His Blood. We receive the strength to be the men and women that we in our better moments know we ought to be. And when the Master comes to us at our Holy Communion it is our duty to cleanse and prepare our lives and hearts to receive this Divine and honoured Guest.

XII

THE HOLY COMMUNION

(READ ST. JOHN vi. 25-69)

WE come finally to the subject of the Holy Communion, the most important subject about which I have to tell you.

I

You will notice that when you go into church the most important thing that you can see is the Altar. We put it at the end of the church. We raise it up so that all can see it. We adorn it with beautiful hangings, with flowers, with a Cross, and we take special care that all the vessels and linen of the Altar should be spotlessly clean. The prayer desk is very important, but we put it at one side of the chancel. The Lectern is impor-

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tant because there the Word of God is read ; the pulpit, because there the Word of God is preached ; but we put them all on one side or the other, nothing must stand in the way of the Altar. It is marked out by its position, in every possible way, as the most important thing in the whole church.

And the service that centres there is the highest and most holy of all those that are celebrated in the Church. Round it throughout the ages have the faithful communicants of the Church gathered, not only to worship God and to listen to the reading of His Word, but more important still to receive the blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the food that is to help their souls along the way of life.

II

Now, apart from the memorial aspect of Holy Communion ("This do in remembrance of me"), I want you to try and understand

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the deeper meaning. There are three passages—St. John vi, St. Matthew xxvi. 26, Prayer of Consecration in Prayer Book, which contain the teaching of the Church about the Holy Communion.

Take first St. John vi. In it we have the story of how our Lord walked on the water and came to the disciples as they were crossing the lake of Galilee. The crowd are surprised to find Him on the other side of the lake (knowing that He hadn't started with His disciples). Now read St. John vi.

“ 25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither ?

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee ? what dost thou work ?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert ; as it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you. Moses gave you

not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

(You see He likens Himself to bread, the ordinary food of man.)

"41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven."

He goes on even more emphatically.

"48 I am the bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

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51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat ?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life : and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat

man, and are dead : he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

This was pretty deep teaching, too deep for most of them.

" 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying ; who can hear it ?

66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away ?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

You see what that teaching means. Jesus says there that just as a man eats bread and (in the East) drinks wine to keep his body alive and in good health,

so He was going to feed men with His body and His blood, not now to feed their bodies, but to feed their souls, to make them good and pure and true. How it was to be He didn't say. He simply stated the fact "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you."

See what a tremendous teaching this is. You know how essential meals are to your body. You know that there is a certain definite strength in the food we eat. When you are tired and weary and hungry your body becomes weak and faint, and then after a meal the strength that resides in the food passes into your body and you become strong again. The strength of the food enters into your body.

What is true of your body is true of your soul too. It cannot live without food, and what Jesus Christ tells you is that just as the strength that is in ordinary food passes into our bodies to make them strong, so (in all reverence be it said) He

is willing to pass His divine strength into us to make our souls strong. If we on our parts will receive "His Body and Blood," as He said Himself, "He that eateth Me even he shall live by Me." We must not exaggerate this teaching as if God was not helping at all outside Holy Communion. Every prayer and every effort after right calls down God's help. But it is a very serious loss to miss this especial means of grace provided by our Lord.

How they were in some sense to eat His Body and Blood, partake of His divine strength, the disciples apparently didn't understand, and as far as we can learn Jesus left it unexplained for nearly a year, until the evening before He died.

During the celebration of the Passover Supper Jesus took bread and brake it, and wine and consecrated it. "This," he said, "is My body." "This is My blood," and He gave it to them to eat. This was the explanation of his momentous words of a year ago: "Except ye eat

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the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you.” This was the way he was going to feed the souls of His people with His body and His blood.

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Now look at your Prayer Book and study the long prayer in the Communion office known as the prayer of consecration. Every time I or any other priest celebrate the Holy Communion we use the following prayer :

“ Our Saviour Jesus Christ who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread ; and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat ; this is my Body which is given for you : Do this in remembrance of Me. Likewise after supper he took the cup ; and, when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this ; for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins : Do this,

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as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me. *Amen.*”

Compare this prayer in your Prayer Book with St. Matthew’s account and you will find they are practically the same. Every time I celebrate the Holy Communion I am doing the same actions, saying the same words, with the same intention that our Blessed Lord used when He instituted the Communion. That is: I am doing the same thing as He did. However unworthy I am, I am in some sense the representative of Jesus Christ. My actions are in reality those of my Lord. This is the way that Jesus Christ feeds the souls of men and women to-day as He said He would.

See what a tremendous thing this is. I know I must feed my body. If I don’t I shall die of starvation. Why will you not believe that you must feed your soul, too. Jesus Christ could hardly have made it any clearer. He said, “Except ye eat the

flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you.”

Were you dying of starvation and I set before you the most wonderful meal imaginable and you refused to eat and died of starvation you could not blame me. You could blame no one but yourself.

And when the Church sets before you the richest feast of all—the Holy Communion—and all the time your little soul is shrivelling up for want of spiritual nourishment and you refuse to draw near, what more can we do? Jesus Christ Himself can do no more. He has no greater gift to-day to offer you and me.

Great privileges mean great responsibilities and unto whomsoever much is given much—very much—shall be required of him again.

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ELLIS (*S.P.C.K.*)

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AND THE WAY OF LIFE

GWYNNE (*Young Churchman Co.*)

PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION

J. P. MAUD (*Handbooks for the Clergy*)

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